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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works

DEPARTMENT

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
21st August 1876. No 2,212.*

No 504 Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. M. SHAW-STEWART, R E, Consulting Engineer for Railways, to Major-General G. W. WALKER, R E, Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Madras, 12th August 1876, No 401 —

I HAVE the honor to lay before Government a letter from the Agent of the South Indian Railway, reporting the circumstances connected with a collision which occurred at the Satur Station on the morning of the 20th ultimo. The Agent's letter is accompanied by reports from the Locomotive Superintendent and the Traffic Manager. The usual form of Accident Statement is also forwarded.

2 The passenger train which leaves Madurai for Tuticorin at 6-15 A M is due at Satur at 9-30 A M. Upon the 20th ultimo this train was ordered to meet at Satur a special goods train which had left Tuticorin at 5-30 A M. The passenger train arrived first at Satur and took up its position upon the main line. A dead engine and a train of empty ballast wagons were standing in the siding, so that both main line and siding were blocked. The dead engine was at the Tuticorin end of the siding, standing tender foremost.

3 Upon the special goods train coming in sight, the Station Master appears to have given orders for a caution signal to be shown on the semaphore, and he further states that he gave orders for a red flag to be shown to the approaching train at the point, and at a level crossing situated some 80 yards further south. The evidence is conflicting as to whether these signals were actually shown. The driver asserts that he saw none, and he came into the station under the impression that the line was clear from seeing the semaphore at caution. Attempts were made to stop him, but too late, his train was turned into the siding, and came into violent collision with the tender of the dead engine standing there. The damage sustained by the rolling stock is specified in the Locomotive Superintendent's report.

4 On the day of the accident I happened to be making a tour of inspection in company with the Acting Chief Engineer, the Locomotive Superintendent, and the Traffic Manager. We proceeded at once to Satur, arriving there a short time after the collision. Inquiries were made on the spot, the result of which showed clearly that the driver of the special goods train and the Station Master were both in fault.

5 With regard to the driver there can be no doubt that he entered the station points at a speed far in excess of the regulated rate of 5 miles per hour, probably 15 miles is a moderate estimate of his speed. The evidence left it doubtful whether the red danger flag was shown at the level crossing and at the points, but there can be no doubt that the disastrous results of the collision were due to the speed at which the train was driven. If the driver had entered the points at a rate of 5 miles per hour, his train would have been well under control, and, even had a collision occurred, the results would have been very different. It may be mentioned that the line is perfectly straight between the station and the large bridge of twelve 70-foot openings over the Satur River. The distance between the station and the bridge is about half-a-mile. From the bridge the line falls at a gradient of 1 in 200 for 10 chains the rest is level. If a good look-out had been kept, the driver could not have failed to see that both lines were blocked.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
21st August 1876. No 2,212

6 With regard to the Station Master, it is clear that he failed to observe the rules laid down for his guidance, and that he showed great want of judgment. In the rules, it is distinctly laid down that the danger signal is to be lowered to caution, only when the line is clear, whereas in this case both lines were blocked. The Traffic Manager states on his behalf that the signal was lowered to caution in order to avoid the delay which would have been caused by stopping the train at the distance of ten telegraph posts (half-a-mile) as provided by the rules, but such an excuse for a gross breach of the regulations cannot be accepted.

7. The driver has had charge of engines for 2½ years, and up to the date of the accident had given satisfaction. He is to be fined one month's pay. The Station Master has been in the Company's service for many years, and his hitherto borne a very high character. He is also to be fined one month's pay. Taking all the circumstances into consideration, I am of opinion that the punishments inflicted are suitable.

From W S BETTS, Esq, Agent, South Indian Railway, to Lieutenant Colonel J. H. M. SHAW-STEWART, R E, Consulting Engineer for Railways, dated Nagapatnam, 29th July 1876, No 1,974

I REPLY I have to send forward the attached report of an accident which occurred at Satur on the 20th instant. There appears to be some doubt regarding the exhibition of a danger signal at the level-crossing gate, but, putting that on one side, I consider the Station Master showed a want of judgment, under the circumstances of both the main line and the sidings being blocked, in not keeping the semaphore signal at danger against the special train, until that train had pulled up dead on the main line south of the station.

2 Regarding the driver, there can be no doubt. The speed he was driving at, even assuming no signals at all were shown, was higher than the regulations sanction. The Locomotive Superintendent informs me he proposes to fine the man a month's pay, with the loss of his wages during his suspension from duty. Driver Sayers has had charge of engines for about 2½ years, and he has previously to this accident performed his work satisfactorily.

3 As you were upon the ground soon after the accident occurred, and heard the inquiry thus made, I shall feel obliged by your informing me if you agree with me regarding the action of the Station Master, if so, I consider he should likewise be fined a month's pay.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY.

AGENT'S DEPARTMENT.

Report of Accident

No 1,973

Details—Tinnevely. Railway District, Section and Mile—District No 10, Section No 2, 21st mile, 15th telegraph post. *Between what two Stations, and name of nearest Village*—Satur Station Yard. *Whether at a level crossing or not*—Not a level crossing. *Date of the Accident*—20th July 1876, 9-30 A.M. *Nature of the Accident*—The No 1 Train from Madurai to Tutuornu was standing at Satur platform and dead engine with train behind standing in siding; the 5-30 A.M. Special from Tutuornu to Madurai approached too quickly and ran into dead engine, six trucks were thrown off the line and much damaged; engine slightly damaged, no one hurt, line cleared by 2-50 P.M. *Circumstances which caused the Accident*—Driver overrunning and signals doubtful. *Nature of assistance afforded*—Line cleared by 2-50 P.M. *Remarks by the Company's Officers*—See attached Reports from the Locomotive Superintendent and the Traffic Manager.

NAGAPATNAM,

29th July 1876

To the Consulting Engineer for Railways, Madras

(Signed) W. S. BETTS,
Agent

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
21st August 1876. No 2,212

From the Traffic Manager, to the Agent of the South Indian Railway, dated Trichinopoly, 24th July 1876, No 5,362-10,434

Accident Report, Satur Station Yard, 20th July 1876

With reference to the attached accident report, I beg to offer the following explanation as to the cause of accident and the result of inquiry on the spot.

2 The 5-30 A.M. special (goods) had to pass No 1 Train at Satur, and No 1 Train arrived first. A dead engine and a train of empty ballast trucks were standing in the siding so that both main line and siding were blocked.

3 The Guards and Drivers of both trains had previous notice that they would pass at Satur.

4 The clerk in charge states that being aware that the siding was foul with dead engine, and that it would be necessary for the special to push the train down through the siding to allow No 1 to pass, he gave orders during the morning to the pointsman and gateman to hold their red flags to stop the special at the points and to lower the semaphore signal to allow the driver to come within the signal distance instead of wasting time and delaying the No 1 Train by keeping the semaphore at danger and stopping the train at the ten-post distance as provided by Rule 4 of working time book, and then again stopping it at the points. In doing this he considered that as the line was perfectly straight for a very long distance, and that in addition to the driver approaching the facing points cautiously as he should have done, he could see that both lines were blocked and that he would have had his train under command. Instead of which, as was seen by the damage done, the train must have been travelling not less than 15 miles an hour immediately before the collision.

5 The result of the accident will be more clearly given in the Locomotive Superintendent's report.

6 My first inquiry was of the Guard of 5-30 A.M. special, who said that on approaching the bridge some distance from the station he saw a red flag, he applied his break, but the train could not be stopped, and shortly after his train came into collision with the dead engine with great violence.

7 The Guard of the No 1 Train who was standing on the platform watching the approach of the special in order to start his train after it had past, corroborates the Special Guard's statement.

8 Guard Wood who was also on the platform watching the approach of the train also observed the red signals, as also did the Engineering Storekeeper and an Engineering Contractor and many others.

9 The Driver of No 1 Train states that there was no red signal shown until after the train had approached very near the points, and that he seeing the train coming too fast, rushed forward holding his arms up to stop the train, when questioned as to what speed the train was approaching, he stated that he thought about 4 miles an hour, and the same statement, with very little variation, was given by another driver and by an East Indian Inspector.

10 Mr Beveridge, an East Indian Sub-Assistant Engineer, said, he was coming out of the urinals at the other end of the platform and he saw a red flag put up at the gate about 100 yards from the facing points, just as the train was approaching close to his gate lodge, but he could not tell whether the pointsman had a red signal, although the gateman and pointsman were in a line with each other.

11 From the glaringly false statement on the part of the drivers and others regarding the speed at which the train was approaching, it would tend to the belief that they were desirous of shielding the driver of the special at the cost of the Station Master.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
21st August 1876. No 2,212*

12 There can be no doubt but that the clerk in charge gave orders for the proper signals to be shown, and the evidence of the greater portion of the witnesses is in favor of that belief, and it is difficult to suppose that other than danger signals would be shown with both lines blocked, and, in the interests of the Company, all the men who saw the train approaching and who saw the danger signals were not shown were guilty of neglect in not pointing it out to the clerk in charge. This applies chiefly to the driver of No 1 whose train was placed in danger by the accident.

13 The clerk in charge has been in the service a long time and is well acquainted with signals and I do not think he would be the man to leave his siding unprotected, and my belief is that the driver was running too fast and had not his train under sufficient control to obey signals.

From the Locomotive and Carriage Superintendent, to the Agent of the South Indian Railway, dated Negapatnam, 25th July 1876, No 2,212.

I REGRET to have to report to you that a collision occurred between a special train proceeding to Madura and a dead engine and train standing in the siding at Satur on the morning of the 20th instant. The driver of the special had orders to pass No 1 Train at Satur. No 1 Train was standing on the main line at the platform about 20 yards clear of the south points, behind the ballast engine on the same siding stood the material train wagons and engine also dead. The clerk in charge would have had to bring the special into the siding, push out two dead engines and train on to main line, allowing No 1 to pass on its journey and then pull the dead train back into the siding and run past on the main line. The Station Semaphore was lowered to caution on the special coming in sight, but no other protection was offered to the blocked station lines beyond the assumption that the driver of special would come up slowly. There is a level crossing about 80 yards from the station on the south side, and I think the station should have been protected by a red flag there and the special stopped until the driver of the train had received orders what he was to do. The driver of the special states that seeing the semaphore down he concluded the station arrangements were made, and he was required to run into the station. The special, however, must have been coming up to the station from the bridge (1/4 mile distant) up a rising gradient at a very high speed, culpable, inasmuch as the line is quite straight and the driver of special could have easily seen that both lines were blocked as it was broad day-light, 10 A.M. The driver of No 1 standing by his engine noticed by the quick motion of the coupling rods of the approaching engine, that the special was coming very fast and ran down with the clerk in charge into the line holding up his arms at danger, the clerk in charge called to the level-crossing gatekeeper to show a red flag, but it was too late as the engine passed the level-crossing as the flag was shown. The special was turned into the station siding and ran into the tender of dead ballast engine at a speed, I should say, of at least 10 miles an hour. I happened to be on the line with an inspection special, and on having knowledge of the accident ran down to Satur with the Traffic Manager where we had all those implicated on the spot. The result of the collision was as follows —

Dead ballast engine tender buffer beam slightly damaged, buffer casting smashed. Special engine buffer beam and fittings totally smashed and front stay plate of framing driven in and the following vehicles on the special damaged. H S O G No 117, under-frame woodwork shattered and ironwork bent. Cotton Wagon No 63, under-frame woodwork shattered, upper structure badly smashed, ironwork badly bent. Cotton Wagon No 37 practically dismembered, woodwork and ironwork very badly smashed. C G No 32 completely wrecked, only the iron framework standing. All these wagons were empty and appear to have been crushed by the thrust from the loaded wagons on the special behind them, by the impetus of the train at the time of the accident. The main line was blocked and No 1 Train delayed about 7 hours. The damaged vehicles were thrown off the line and the traffic restored by a break down special that was run from Madura to Satur by Locomotive Foreman on notice of the accident. I have suspended the driver of special pending consideration what to do with him.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
21st August 1876. No. 2,212.*

No. 505.

ORDER THEREON, 21st August 1876, No. 2,212.

RAILWAY, No 58.

ORDERED to be recorded

2. The Governor in Council concurs with the Consulting Engineer that the breach of the rules for signals, by the Station Master, does not admit of excuse. Both he and the Driver were rightly punished.

3. The Station Master has been very lightly dealt with for giving an order necessarily causing danger in direct violation of the rules laid down for his guidance.

(True Extract.)

Colonel,

Offg. Under Secy. to Govt, P.W.D.

To the Consulting Engineer for Railways.

Exd W H French
Share Copies

No. 1774

~~Great Southern~~
GREAT SOUTHERN OF INDIA RAILWAY.

AGENT'S OFFICE,

NEGAPATAM, 29 July 1876

From

THE AGENT,
~~Great Southern of India Railway~~

To The Consulting Engineer for Railways
Madras.

SIR,

I regret I have to send forward the attached report of an accident which occurred at Sattoor on the 20th Instant. There appears to be some doubt regarding the exhibition of a danger signal at the level crossing gate, but putting that on one side I consider the Station Master should have shown a want of judgment, under the circumstances of both the main line and the siding being blocked, in not keeping the Remaphase signal at danger against the Special train, until that train had pulled up dead on the main line south of the station.

Regarding the driver there can be no doubt. The speed he was driving at, even assuming no signals at all were shown, was higher than the regulations sanction. The Locomotive Superintendent informs me he proposes to fine the man a month's pay, with the loss of his wages during his suspension from duty. Driver Sayee has had charge of Engines for about 2 1/2 years and he has previously to this accident performed his work satisfactorily.

As you were upon the ground soon after the accident occurred, and heard the inquiry thus made, I shall feel obliged by your informing me if you agree with me regarding the action of the Station Master. I so consider he should be likewise fined a month's pay. I have the honor to be
Yours most obedient servant
The Agent, P. L. J.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

CONSULTING ENGINEER'S OFFICE,

MADRAS, 12th August 1876

No. 401

From

LIEUT.-COLONEL J. H. M. SHAW-STEWART, R.E.,

Consulting Engineer for Railways,

To

MAJOR-GENERAL G. W. WALKER, R.E.,

Secretary to Government,

Public Works Department,

Fort Saint George

SIR,

N^o. 1974-29th
July 1876 - with
enclosure

I have the honour
to lay before Government a letter
from the Agent of the South
Indian Railway reporting the
circumstances connected with a
collision which occurred at the
Satu station on the morning
of the 20th ultimo. The Agent's
letter is accompanied by reports
from the Locomotive Super-
intendent and the Traffic
Manager. The usual form
of

Received 29th July 1876
J. H. M. Shaw-Stewart
Consulting Engineer for Railways
MADRAS
12th August 1876
Major-General G. W. Walker
Secretary to Government
Public Works Department
Fort Saint George

of accident statement is also forwarded.

2.

The passenger train which leaves Madurai for Tuticorin at 6-15 a.m. is due at Patan at 7-30 a.m. Upon the 20th ultimo this train was ordered to meet at Patan a special goods train which had left Tuticorin at 5-30 a.m. The passenger train arrived first at Patan, and took up its position upon the main line. A dead engine and a train of empty ballast wagons were standing in the siding, so that both main line and siding were blocked. The dead engine was

was at the Tuticorin end of the siding, standing tender foremost.

3.

Upon the special goods train coming in sight, the Station-Master appears to have given orders for a caution signal to be shown on the semaphore; and he further states that he gave orders for a red flag to be shown to the approaching train at the points, and at a level crossing situated some 80 yards further south. The evidence is conflicting as to whether these signals were actually shown. The Driver asserts that he saw none; and he came into the station under

under the impression that the line was clear, from seeing the semaphore at caution. Attempts were made to stop him, but too late; his train was turned into the siding, and came into violent collision with the tender of the dead engine standing there. The damage sustained by the rolling-stock is specified in the Locomotive Superintendent's report.

4. On the day of the accident I happened to be making a tour of inspection in company with the Acting Chief Engineer, the Locomotive Superintendent, and

and the Traffic Manager. We proceeded at once to the Station, arriving there a short time after the collision. Enquiries were made on the spot, the result of which showed clearly that the Driver of the special goods train and the Station-Master were both in fault.

5 With regard to the driver, there can be no doubt that he entered the station points at a speed far in excess of the regulated rate of 5 miles per hour: probably 15 miles is a moderate estimate of his speed. The evidence left it doubtful whether the red danger flag was shown at

the level crossing and at the points; but there can be no doubt that the disastrous results of the collision were due to the speed at which the train was driven. If the Driver had entered the points at a rate of 5 miles per hour, his train would have been well under control; and, even had a collision occurred, the results would have been very different. It may be mentioned that the line is perfectly straight between the station and the large bridge of twelve 70 feet openings over the Patuxet river. The distance between

15
between the station and the bridge is about half a mile. From the bridge the line falls at a gradient of 1 in 200 for 10 chains: the rest is level. If a good lookout had been kept, the driver could not have failed to see that both lines were blocked.

6 With regard to the Station-Master, it is clear that he failed to observe the rules laid down for his guidance, and that he showed great want of judgment. In the rules, it is distinctly laid down that the danger signal

signal is to be lowered to caution, only when the line is clear; whereas in this case both lines were blocked. The Traffic Manager states on his behalf that the signal was lowered to caution in order to avoid the delay which would have been caused by stopping the train at the distance of ten telegraph posts, (half a mile) as provided by the rules; but such an excuse for a gross breach of the regulations cannot be accepted.

Y. The

17
7. The driver has had charge of engines for 25 years, and up to the date of the accident has given satisfaction. He is to be fined one month's pay. The Station-Master has been in the Company's service for many years, and has hitherto borne a very high character. He is also to be fined one month's pay. Taking all the circumstances into consideration, I am of opinion that the punishments inflicted are suitable.

I have the honour to be
Sir
Your most obedient servant

Wm. M. W. B. B. B.

Genl. Engineer for Railways

P.W.D.

1419676

N^o 2

No 2212

Public Works Department.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

UNDER date the 21 Aug 76
Read the following —

From
The Cong. Engineer
for Railways } (H.C. No 401 of 12th Aug 1876)

Ordered to be recorded.
The Governor in Council
concur with the Consulting
Engineer that the breach of
the rules for signals, by the
Station Master, does
not admit of excuse.
Both he and the Driver
were rightly punished.

THW.

2. The Station Master
has been very lightly
dealt with for giving an
order necessarily causing
danger in direct violation
of

Cong. Eng for Railways
T.D.E. 11-9-76

Cir-16-8-76 P.W.D. 21-8-76
Depd to Ctg 14-8-76

Dated 12th Aug 1876
Received
No. 401
Reprinted
on 20 July 1876
1705

From
The Consulting Engineer
for Railways
To
The Secretary to Government,
P. W. Department,
Fort Saint George.

of the rules laid down
for his guidance.

5834

Govt. of 1870 Madrid.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

The Com^o Eng^o for N^o.

Dated

From

Re

To

U. O. 21, 22, 23, No. 2212

Nos. 501 - 505

12-1-70

Accident. Late P.

Letter from the Eng^o
for R^o reporting
an — at the station
on the 20th
July 1870 recorded
with remarks.